C L A I M S

What is claimed is:

1.   A method for retrieving information regarding a service in a network
5   environment, the method comprising:

receiving a query packet;

determining a class of query, wherein the class of query is indicated by the query
packet; and

determining at least one metric, the at least one metric being identified by the
10   query packet.

2.   The method of claim 1, wherein the class of query is a lookup query.

3.   The method of claim 1, wherein the class of query is a measured query.

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4.   The method of claim 1, wherein the class of query is indicated by an operation
code (op-code) of the query packet.

5.   The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one metric is a round trip time.

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6.   The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one metric is a border gateway
protocol metric.

7.   The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one metric is a multi-exit discriminator (MED) metric.

5   8.   The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one metric is a local preference metric.

9.   The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one metric is a community metric.

10   10.   The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one metric is identified by a sub-operation (sub-op) code.

11.   The method of claim 1, further comprising determining a type route identification (ID).

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12.   A system for retrieving information regarding a service in a network environment, the system comprising:

        an interface to receive a query packet;

        a processor coupled to the interface, the processor configured to determine a class
20   of query, wherein the class of query is indicated by the query packet; the processor also being configured to determine at least one metric, the at least one metric being identified by the query packet.

13.   The system of claim 12, wherein the class of query is a lookup query.

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14. The system of claim 12, wherein the class of query is a measured query.

15. The system of claim 12, wherein the class of query is indicated by an operation code (op-code) of the query packet.

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16. The system of claim 12, wherein the at least one metric is a round trip time.

17. The system of claim 12, wherein the at least one metric is a border gateway protocol metric.

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18. The system of claim 12, wherein the at least one metric is identified by a sub-operation (sub-op) code.

19. A system for retrieving information regarding a service in a network environment, the system comprising:

15 the system comprising:

a first processor configured to send a query packet;

an interface configured to receive the query packet; and

a second processor coupled to the interface, the second processor configured to determine a class of query, wherein the class of query is indicated by the query packet; the second processor also being configured to determine at least one metric, the at least one metric being identified in the query packet; and the second processor also being configured to send the at least one metric to the first processor.

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20. A computer program product for retrieving information regarding a service in a network environment, the computer program comprising:

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computer code receiving a query packet;

computer code determining a class of query, wherein the class of query is indicated by the query packet;

computer code determining at least one metric, the at least one metric being
5   identified in the query packet; and

a computer readable medium that stores the computer codes.

21.   The computer program product of claim 19, wherein the computer readable medium is selected from the group consisting of CD-ROM, floppy disk, tape, flash
10   memory, system memory, hard drive, and data signal embodied in a carrier wave.

22.   The method of claim 1, further comprising transmitting the determined at least one metric.

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